



**TOXIC MASCULINITY REPRESENTED BY PATRICK
BATEMAN IN MARY HARRON'S *AMERICAN PSYCHO***

**A FINAL PROJECT
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For the Bachelor Majoring Degree in American Cultural Studies
In English Department
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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer states truthfully that this project is compiled by him without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, the writer ascertains that he did not take the material from other publications or someone's work except the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, 03 October 2018

Angga Ferdian

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Saiki, kene, ngene, aku gelem.”

(Ki Ageng Suryomentaram)

“Eling lan waspada.”

(Ki Ageng Ismaya)

*I dedicated this final project paper to my beloved
parents, my girlfriend, and my best friends.*

APPROVAL

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BATEMAN IN *AMERICAN PSYCHO* MOVIE**

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The writer realizes that this project is still far from perfection. The writer, therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this project better. Finally, the writer expects that this project will be useful to the readers.

Semarang, October 03rd 2018

Angga Ferdian

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ABSTRAK

Film *American Psycho* yang disutradarai oleh Marry Harron menggambarkan tentang kegilaan seorang eksekutif muda yang bernama Patrick Bateman. *Project* ini berfokus pada karakter utama yaitu Patrick Bateman pada film *American Psycho*. Tujuan dari penulisan ini adalah untuk menganalisis ciri-ciri *Toxic Masculinity* yang tergambarkan dalam karakter Patrick Bateman. Penulis menggunakan penelitian pustaka untuk mengumpulkan data-data yang di dapat dari buku elektronik, jurnal, artikel, dan dokumen onlen. Di aspek intrinsik, penulis membahas tentang tema dan karakter. Sedangkan di aspek ekstrinsik membahas tentang teori *Toxic Masculinity*. Hasil dari kajian *project* ini menggambarkan Patrick Bateman sebagai sosok yang mewakili karakteristik *Toxic Masculinity*, seperti; *Violent Domination and Greed*.

Kata kunci: Dominasi Kekerasan, Ketamakan, *American Psycho*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Masculinity is not something that a man born with but rather it is socially and culturally constructed that set standard on what it means to be a man (Pleck,1993). Toxic masculinity is constructed of aspects of hegemonic masculinity are socially destructive (Kupers, 2005:717). According to Terry A. Kupers in *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, toxic masculinity is “*the constellation of socially regressive male traits that serve to foster domination, the devaluation of women, homophobia, and wanton violence*” (2005,714). From the statement above, it is explained that toxic masculinity is a type of masculinity that contains socially regressive male traits such as violence, domination, and homophobia.

Movie is one of the best media to entertain people. Generally, movie is divided into various genre, such as horror, comedy, action, thriller and drama. However, movie is also considered as a medium to convey any indirect or direct message or ideology to public. We can find a lot of movies that contain toxic masculinity as the main idea. One of the examples is *American Psycho*. The movie tells about the story of Patrick Bateman, the main character in the movie. Patrick Bateman is a worker at Wall Street. The movie tells Patrick Bateman’s insatiable longing for status and his fascination with violence, thus, the idea of toxic masculinity is dominant in this movie. The writer chooses *American Psycho*

as the object of this project because it portrays the idea of toxic masculinity clearly.

1.2. Research Problems

- a. What is the correlation between the character and the theme related to toxic masculinity in the movie?
- b. How does toxic masculinity portrayed by Patrick Bateman in the movie?

1.3. Aims of the Study

- a. To analyze the major and minor characters and the theme related to toxic masculinity in the movie.
- b. To analyze toxic masculinity in the main character.

1.4. Scope of the Study

In discussing and answering the research problems, the writer will limit the discussion to make easier when analyzing the movie. The writer discusses the main character in the movie and the masculinity theory.

1.5. Methods of the Study

In composing the research, the writer uses library research (browsing, reading, watching) and sociological approach as the method of the study. The library research itself is reading some books, watching the movie, and collecting the data from internet references as the method of research. Sociological approach is used in this study as the method of approach.

CHAPTER 2

SYNOPSIS OF *AMERICAN PSYCHO*

In 1987, Patrick Bateman is a rich investment banker who lives in New York and works for Pierce & Pierce. Patrick always wants to impress and keep up with his circle of wealthy friends and other people around him by wearing fancy clothes, dining with them at fancy restaurants, and owning fancy things. He always wants to be the best among his friends. He goes on a murderous crazily as he is slowly descent into madness in his search for identity.

One day, Patrick and his friends are having a meeting. They show their business cards to each other. Patrick is angry when he knows that Paul Allen's card is better than his. On his way home, Patrick still angry because of what happened. For expressing his anger he is really killed a man and his dog. Although has already kill the man and his dog, Patrick is still angry with Paul so he arranges a dinner with him. After having dinner, Paul is drunk and Patrick lures him to his apartment. At his apartment, Patrick has an imagination to kill him with an axe and staged a situation in order to make people believe that Paul goes to London. After doing that event, Patrick's bloodlust became more and more uncontrollable. He hates prostitutes but it never happens and the model, because he considers them as sex objects. He kills the model but he has just imagination to kill prostitutes – in another word he never killed them. One night, Patrick uses an ATM. He finds a stray cat and he imagines the ATM displays the text "feed me a stray cat". So, he tries to shoot the cat, just before he pulls the trigger, an old

woman appears and tries to stop him. Patrick shoots her many times and kills her. Patrick really killed the woman. Not so far from that incident, the policemen hear the gunshot and they chase Patrick, but Patrick runs away and hides in his office so the police could not arrest him. Then Patrick has an imagination again. He imagines the policemen and he himself are involved in a gunfight. He manages to kill the policemen and unexpectedly blow their cars, which is amaze and confuse him, because it is just in his imagination. After that, he flees to his office and frantically phones his lawyer to confess all the murdered he has done.

Patrick is a fortunate man. When he really kills the people (Paul, the model, the old man and his dog, old woman and cat) no one knows about that. People included the lawyer and his friends just know how he has some imagination about killing people. So, when he meets his lawyer about the murders he has made, his lawyer laughs and thinks that it is just a funny joke. Confused by what the lawyer has just said, Patrick is just stuck in his condition. He cannot escape from his fantasies and Patrick still retains his bloodlust.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Intrinsic Aspects

3.1.1. Movie Theory

According to Graeme Turner, movie has audio visual element so that the viewers can watch the story and listen to the dialogues at once. In its relation with society, movie always corresponds to the society because the stories refer and depict the problems of people in the society. It is stated by Graeme Turner in his book *Film as Social Practice* that, “understanding a movie is not essentially an aesthetic practice; it is a social practice which mobilizes the full range of meaning systems within the culture” (Turner, 2006: 225).

The writer will give deeper such an explanation about what is happening in the movie in order to understand better about the movie elements. According to Pratista, “intrinsic elements in the movie are divided into two elements, narrative elements and cinematic elements”(2008: 1). The writer will only discuss the narrative elements, which are consist of several elements such as theme and character.

3.1.1.1. Theme

Theme is the main idea presented in a movie or other imaginative works. According to Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*,

Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with “motif”, but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or

asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader (1999: 170).

From the explanation above, it is stated that theme can be found inside an imaginative work whether implicitly or explicitly presented.

3.1.1.2. Character

The other element beside theme is character. Character in a movie or other imaginative works is used to advance the story. Other than that, character can also be used to present the message or the main idea of the story. Abrams said:

Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action (1999:33).

From the statement above, it is said that character through dialogue or action is represented with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities which define the character. Moreover, there are two types of character. Character is divided into flat and round character, respectively. Below is the explanation of flat and round character.

A flat character (also called a type, or “two dimensional”), Forster says, is built around “a single idea or quality” and is presented without much individualizing detail and therefore can be fairly adequately described in a single phrase or sentence. A round character is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity; such a character therefore is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like real persons, is capable of surprising us (Abrams, 1999: 33).

It can be concluded that flat character can be distinguished from round character by the way the character built and presented. A flat character usually built around

a single quality or idea and lack of depth. Meanwhile, a round character usually presented with complexity and depth.

3.2. Extrinsic Aspects

3.2.2. Toxic Masculinity

According to John Beynon in *Masculinities and Culture* (2002:2), men are not born with masculinity as part of their genetic make-up, but it is something that acculturated and composed of social codes of behavior which they learn to recreate in culturally appropriate ways. From the statement above it is said that masculinity is a product of culture and not something that men inherited from birth.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is then made known as an introduction in looking at masculinity in a historical context or through lens of class (Beynon, 2002). Connell describes hegemonic masculinity as “the dominant notion of masculinity in a particular historical context” (1987). In contemporary Western culture, it dictates men on what are the ideal standards of becoming ‘real men’. The foundations of hegemonic masculinity are based on hierarchy of inter male dominance and stigmatization against homosexual (Connell, 1987).

From the definition of hegemonic masculinity above, the Western and European culture have identified the recent hegemonic masculinity aspects. For example, ruthless competition, suppression of emotion except anger, unwilling to show fear, refuse to ask for help, abhor everything that relates to feminine attributes and homophobia (Brittan, 1989). Those aspects are the negative aspects

of hegemonic masculinity and may give negative impacts to the individual and society.

Hegemonic masculinity is an umbrella term that covers toxic masculinity as its branch. These socially destructive standards of hegemonic masculinity that are valued and believed culturally such as violent domination, homophobia, and greed are depicted by the concept of toxic masculinity (Kupers, 2001). On the other hand, there are some aspects of hegemonic masculinity that are not toxic, such as having pride in winning sports, having close-knit friendship, succeeding in career and providing for the family. Another nontoxic example is subordinated masculinity that differs from hegemonic masculinity because it supports feminism and anti-homophobia movement (Kupers, 1993).

From the statement above, there is a relation between toxic masculinity and hegemonic masculinity because toxic masculinity diverges from hegemonic masculinity aspects that mostly are destructive. The ideal masculinity traits that can be damaging not only toward men themselves but also women and society are the main idea of toxic masculinity. It does not mean to demean men who keep masculine traditional traits. It is recognized that those behavior are deep-rooted in men and can be harmful for everyone that involved (Kaplan, 2006). The writer chooses three toxic masculinity traits such as violent domination and greed.

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or

deprivation”. In other words, violence has negative connotations based on the words; injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, and deprivation. Violence is believed as a sign of manhood in toxic masculinity. According to Kimmel (1996), the one most obvious sign of manhood is violence. This form of belief has caused destructive effects for both men and society. Men are forced to resort to violence, if they do not want to be seen as weak. Meanwhile, according to Oxford Dictionary, domination is “the exercise of power or influence over someone or something, or the state of being so controlled”. In short, domination is a state where someone or something able to use power or influence to control someone or something. According to Mike Donaldson in *What is Hegemonic Masculinity?*

Hegemonic masculinity is a question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance. Through hegemonic masculinity most men benefit from the control of women. For a very few, it delivers control of other men (1993:11).

From the quotation above, we can understand that masculinity teaches men to establish dominance over women. Not only men benefit from the control of women, but also from the control of other men. A strong will to dominate others, extreme competition, and greed may bring destructive effects to both the individual and society. So, the writer concludes that violent domination is the exercise of power or influence to control someone or something using destructive ways.

Greed can be defined as the selfish desire to possess wealth, substances, objects, people, power, status, appreciation or attention far beyond what is

required for basic human comfort (Robertson, 2013). In short, greed is an insatiable craving for material gain, be it power, money, status, or food. As Kupers state, “unfortunate male proclivities associated with toxic masculinity include extreme competition and greed, insensitivity to or lack of consideration of the experiences and feelings of others, a strong need to dominate and control others (...)” (2001:717). From the quotation above, Kupers mentions that greed is one of the aspects of toxic masculinity.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

4.1. Movie Theory

4.1.1. Theme

American Psycho is an American movie that tells the story of Patrick Bateman and his toxic masculinity. Thus, the toxic masculinity aspects appear as the theme of the movie. During a scene where Patrick Bateman gets facial and nails treatment, there is a monologue where Patrick describes himself;

Patrick : I have all the characteristics of a human being... flesh, blood, skin, hair... but not a single, clear, identifiable emotion, except for greed and disgust.

American Psycho (2000), 00:22:40 - 00:23:00

From the monologue above, it can be concluded that physically Patrick has all the traits as a masculine man, but he has tendency of toxic masculinity traits.

4.1.2. Character

4.1.2.1. Major Character

4.1.2.1.1. Patrick Bateman

Patrick Bateman is the anti-hero and the sole main character in this movie. He is the center of the story in this movie. The whole story follows Patrick's descent into madness and found no way to redeem himself. He is also the narrator in this movie. Patrick Bateman is a typical yuppie you might find in the 80's. He is a handsome, intelligent, and well-educated man. Patrick's hair is slicked back, his

nose is sharp, and his eyes are brown. He got prominent jawline and his body is in good shape. He is still young, 27 years old, and has a high-paid job. He earns a lot and also spends a lot of money. He is very narcissistic and self-absorbed.

4.1.2.2. Minor Character

4.1.2.2.1 Paul Allen

Paul Allen is one of the minor characters in this movie. He is Patrick's colleague and also one of his victims. Paul works at the same place with Patrick and also has a position as a vice president. He has similar haircut, facial feature, and stature as Patrick. He is also has similar lifestyle as Patrick and his colleagues. He wears expensive clothes and likes to have a dinner at a fancy restaurant. Despite having the same lifestyle and job as the other characters in this movie, Paul Allen has some things to be envied by the other characters. For example, Paul has the best business card among his colleagues. This makes his colleagues envy him, including Patrick Bateman.

4.2. Patrick Bateman's Toxic Masculinity

Patrick Bateman portrays traits of toxic masculinity; those traits are violent domination and greed. Below is the analysis of how those traits of toxic masculinity portrayed by Patrick Bateman.

4.2.1 Violent Domination

Violent domination is the first destructive aspect of masculinity that is portrayed in Patrick Bateman. He often resorts to violence to express his anger. We can see the example in the dialogue below.

Patrick : You reek of shit. Do you know that? (shouting) Al, I'm sorry. It's just that... I don't know. I don't have anything in common with you.

Al : Oh. Oh, thank you, mister. Thank you. I'm cold out here.

Patrick : You know what a fucking-loser you are?

Al : What?

EXTREME WIDE SHOT of the street. Bateman's shadowed figure is hunched over the Homeless Man, stabbing him in the stomach. The dog barks wildly and Bateman stomps on it until it is silent. *American Psycho* (2000), 00:21:36 – 00:22:06

That dialogue above shows Patrick Bateman mocks a homeless man before he kills that man and his dog. Patrick is angry towards one of his colleagues. Because his colleagues prefer Paul Allen's card, Patrick feels he does not dominate his social circle. On his way home he meets a homeless man and decides to kill him and his dog. This is a way for him to express his anger in a masculine way.

Paul : Is that a raincoat?

Patrick : Yes, it is. In '87, Huey released this, Fore, their most accomplished album. I think their undisputed masterpiece is "Hip To Be Square." The song's so catchy most people probably don't listen to the lyrics. But they should, because it's not just about the pleasures of conformity and the importance of trends. It's also a personal statement about the band itself. Hey, Paul! Try getting a reservation at Dorsia now, you fucking stupid bastard. You fucking bastard!

BATEMAN crosses the room and picks up the ax.
We follow BATEMAN from behind as he walks up to Owen, the ax raised over his head. *American Psycho* (2000), 00:27:51 – 00:28:26

Meanwhile, the dialogue above shows Patrick Bateman kills his colleague, Paul Allen. Before the murder, Patrick has a dinner with Paul. Paul gets drunk and Patrick tricks him to go to his apartment. After he is there, Patrick chops Paul with

an axe and kills him. This is a form of anger expression and by doing this Patrick also can dominate his social circle again.

4.1.1.2 Greed

Greed is the third and last destructive aspect of masculinity that portrayed by Patrick Bateman in *American Psycho* movie. Patrick feels the need to keep up with his colleagues. Patrick also feels that he needs to be the best of them. Below is the example.

Price pulls a card from an inside coat pocket and holds it up for their inspection: "PAUL OWEN, PIERCE & PIERCE, MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS." Bateman swallows, speechless. The sound in the room dies down and all we hear is a faint heartbeat as Bateman stares at the magnificent card.

Patrick : Look at that subtle off-white coloring. The tasteful thickness of it. Oh, my God. It even has a watermark.

His hand shaking, Bateman lifts up the card and stares at it until it fills the screen.

Luis : Is something wrong, Patrick? You're sweating.
American Psycho (2000), 00:19:49 – 00:20:08

Those dialogue above shows a scene where Patrick and his colleagues show their new business cards to each other. Patrick is angry when he knows that Paul Allen's card is better than his. In the end, this urge to be recognized as the best among his colleagues leads him to kill a homeless man and his very colleague, Paul Allen.

Patrick : When I get to Paul Allen's place, I use the keys I took from his pocket before disposing of the body. There is a moment of sheer panic when I realize that Paul's apartment overlook the park and obviously more expensive than mine.
American Psycho (2000), 00:30:14 – 00:30:28

Meanwhile, the dialogue above shows a scene where Patrick goes to Paul's apartment. It is shown that Patrick envies Paul, because Paul's apartment is better than his and he always wants to be the best. This insatiable need leads Patrick to kill people. Therefore, greed brings destructive effects for Patrick and those around him.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Toxic masculinity is depicted in *American Psycho* through its destructive aspects. In the movie, Patrick Bateman is the main character who portrays destructive aspects of toxic masculinity. From the analysis, we can conclude that there are three destructive aspects that are portrayed the main character. Those aspects are violent domination and greed. Patrick often resorts to violence to dominate people. He kills homeless and his colleague to express his anger and dominate his colleagues. Then, Patrick's greed makes him need to be recognized as the best among everyone around him. He tries to be the best among his colleagues and when someone manages to be better than him, he resorts to violence to finish that problem. Patrick is a very lucky man, when he really murder people no one knows about that. Patrick even tries to confess to his lawyer all the murders he has done, but his lawyer does not believe him and think that it is just a funny joke because lack of evidence. In the end, Patrick Bateman cannot escape from his fantasies and he still retained his bloodlust.

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